

Bonita Peak Mining District Update

June/July 2016



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment



Update of Recent Activities

- The Silverton/San Juan County Planning Group has a new Technical Advisor - Marcus Griswold of Skeo Solutions. As needed, additional technical experts will be assigned to provide specific technical support to the planning group, which meets monthly with EPA and its federal and state partners. These resources are made available through EPA's Technical Assistance Services (TASC) for Communities Program.
- A sampling crew of approximately 19 people from EPA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Trout Unlimited, Bureau of Land Management, Colorado Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Sunnyside Gold Corp., and associated contractors, began work in the Bonita Peak Mining District on June 6. Surface water was sampled from the headwaters of the Animas River, Cement Creek and Mineral Creek downstream to Bakers Bridge. The investigation of high-flow conditions focused on the 46 mine sites and two study areas of the proposed site, including major confluences and sentinel locations, such as existing gauging stations. Several of the headwater sample locations were inaccessible due to snow. Those areas are scheduled to be sampled the week of June 27th. Low-flow sampling will take place in late August and into September.
- Two free 24-hour health and safety classes were held in Silverton and Durango in early June. The classes were hosted by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to help prepare local residents for employment opportunities that may become available in the Bonita Peak Mining District. Approximately 18 people attended the Durango class and 12 people attended the Silverton class.
- Information about the proposal to add the Bonita Peak Mining District to the National Priorities List and planned activities at the site was shared by EPA in a public meeting in Farmington, New Mexico on June 9, 2016. The public comment period for the proposed listing was extended to June 13, 2016. The public comment period has now closed, and EPA will consider and respond to all comments received prior to making a final decision to add the site to the NPL.

Upcoming Public Events

- **June 23, 2016 – Animas River Community Forum, in Silverton (9:30 am to noon).** Learn about community advisory groups, technical assistance grants and the TASC program from EPA and CDPHE.
- **June 28, 2016 – Animas River Stakeholders Group, in Silverton (6:30 pm).**
- **August 3 to 5, 2016 – San Juan Mining Conference, in Durango and Silverton.** The theme of this year's conference is "Developing Innovative Partnerships and Solutions." EPA will provide a short presentation on planned activities in the Bonita Peak Mining District.
- **August 6, 2016 – SuperFUND Days.** EPA and CDPHE will have a booth in Silverton to share information about our work in the Bonita Peak Mining District.

Gold King Mine News

EPA has begun maintenance activities (cleaning sediment from the ponds and filter bags) at the Gold King Mine Interim Water Treatment Plant. These activities involve a small work crew and are expected to continue through the end of June. If you have any questions, please call Joyel Dhieux, EPA Federal On-Scene Coordinator, at 303-312-6647 or 720-441-9961 (cell).

EPA performed water, sediment and additional sampling March 22-24, 2016, at multiple locations along the Animas and San Juan rivers, in accordance with the agency's Conceptual Monitoring Plan. The data indicate that none of the sampled constituents exceed risk-based recreational screening thresholds for water or sediment. Additional sampling was conducted this month and is planned again for this fall. EPA will also coordinate with local jurisdictions and tribes to sample the rivers during heavy rain events during the summer. View the March sampling results: [March 2016 Follow Up Monitoring Data \(XLSX\) \(1 pg, 329 K\)\(1 pg, 336 K\)](#) Access all water quality data in the watershed via [EPA's water quality portal](#). View the [Monitoring Plan](#).

EPA awarded the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency \$465,000 for water quality monitoring in the San Juan River. This funding is in addition to \$1 million awarded in October for water quality monitoring and ecological restoration activities throughout the Reservation. For more information visit <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-awards-465000-navajo-nation-water-monitoring-san-juan-river>.

New on the Web

- *2016 Bonita Peak Mining District Sampling Plan* – <http://bpmd.techlawinc.com>
- Summary of Superfund Resources Available to Communities
<https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/08/1565989>

For More Information

Visit the Bonita Peak Mining District website <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/bonita-peak>